



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

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Fact Sheet

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services *Your Guide Through The American Journey*

At U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), we value the responsibility to uphold our time-honored American traditions of welcoming immigrants seeking freedom, liberty and the opportunity for a better life. Established on March 1st, 2003 by the Homeland Security Act, USCIS continues to support these traditions by keeping America's doors open, but well guarded. With approximately 15,000 employees in 250 offices worldwide, USCIS processes more than six million immigration benefits applications annually. Our core objectives - to ensure the integrity of our immigration system, grant immigration and citizenship benefits to qualified applicants, provide accurate and useful information to our customers and promote citizenship awareness and understanding - form the foundation of what we do and provide the framework for how our nation will approach immigration policy and procedure now and into the future.

➤ **The American Journey: Charting the Course**

USCIS strives to ensure that every applicant for an immigration benefit is equipped with the necessary tools to become active, educated and successful participants of the American journey.

Education

The Office of Citizenship was established as part of the USCIS to promote an understanding of the civic principles on which this country was founded by providing resources and information to immigrants at two key points in their journey: When they first become lawful permanent residents and when they are ready to begin the formal naturalization process.

The Office of Citizenship has created several new products to assist newly arrived immigrants in adjusting to life in the United States. Some of these innovative products include:

- *Welcome to the United States: A Guide for New Immigrants.* The guide contains practical information to help immigrants become acclimated into American society. The guide is free and available online for download and will be distributed in ten languages.
- Civics Flash Cards designed to assist in preparation for the naturalization exam are available online for download at no cost.
- Student workbooks and teacher study guides, based on the New Immigrant Orientation Guide, are being developed for use as a teaching tool in the English as a Second language classroom.
- The Office of Citizenship is also developing a CD audio program to assist immigrants in preparation for the naturalization exam.

Convenience

USCIS marks a new era in immigration benefit services by utilizing modern technology and offering multi-lingual capabilities to better serve our customers with convenience, efficiency, and flexibility.

“Don’t wait in line, go online!”

New electronic filing capabilities and the increased use of the Internet has led to decreased waiting times and faster service for USCIS customers. The USCIS website, www.uscis.gov, receives over 100,000 visitors online, and provides customers a full suite of available services, including:

- InfoPass: A free online multi-lingual appointment system, in which customers can make an appointment at their local USCIS District office instead of waiting in line to meet with an Immigration Information Officer.
- The “How Do I...?” Series: Helpful brochures to provide USCIS customers with important information about immigration benefits, like how to change an address, how to become a financial sponsor, or how to help a relative become a permanent resident, in an easy to understand format. Thirteen fact sheets addressing services available to U.S. citizens and permanent residents are currently available. Twenty-one additional fact sheets are scheduled for release this summer and fall.
- Check your Case Status: Customers can use a receipt number from an application filed with USCIS to check the status of pending case information at any time, online.
- File an application online: E-Filing is available for 8 of the most frequently applied for immigration benefits. By Fiscal Year 2006, 12 forms will be available through E-Filing, representing over 90% of applications filed every year.
- The Customer Service Center Help Desk: A toll-free, bi-lingual (English-Spanish) 1-800 call center is available 24 hours a day for both Domestic and International clients with questions regarding their immigration information needs.

➤ The Destination for many: Citizenship

As a people, Americans are joined together by the common bond of citizenship. The freedoms we cherish and the liberties we are afforded as citizens are an honor to which only a select few are granted the ability to enjoy. It is important for every American to recognize those who have made great sacrifices to become American citizens and how their unique contributions have greatly enriched our nation. At the same time, USCIS is working diligently to ensure that the meaning behind taking the Oath of Citizenship is not lost upon our new citizens.

- Meaningful ceremonies: USCIS is conducting meaningful and memorable ceremonies with historical backdrops that include Ellis Island, Angel Island, and Mt. Rushmore.
- Child Citizenship Act Program: Simplifies and streamlines processes by which parents obtain a Certificate of Citizenship for their internationally adopted children.
- Overseas Military Naturalizations: USCIS has held naturalization ceremonies for men and women serving in our armed forces abroad in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- Posthumous Military Naturalizations: USCIS has posthumously naturalized over 50 service members who have died serving our country.

➤ The Privilege: Becoming an American

The highest title our government can bestow on anyone is United States Citizen. Through our core values; *respect, integrity and ingenuity*, USCIS works to ensure that the privilege of citizenship is carried on long

after the Oath of Citizenship is taken by educating customers on the benefits, pride and rewards that come with being a citizen of the United States.

– USCIS –

On March 1, 2003, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) became one of three former INS components to join the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. USCIS is charged with fundamentally transforming and improving the delivery of immigration and citizenship services, while enhancing our nation's security.